

Oklahoma Alert: Teen Births Are Rising...Again!



(Fall 2008)

In recent years, Oklahoma has invested few resources, little funding and limited training in teen pregnancy and STD prevention programs. As a result, the slow but steady decrease in teen births and birth rates that occurred from 1991 through 2005, reversed itself in a dramatic way in 2006. Between 2005 and 2007 the number of births to teens in Oklahoma increased by over 800! This is *not* good news for Oklahoma's young people. This is *not* good news for our state's overall future - for education, our health status, our workforce or our economy.

Number of Births to Oklahoma Teens

Ages	2004	2005	2006	2007
14 and younger	104	113	96	93
15-17	2,145	2,020	2,280	2,293
18-19	4,704	4,662	4,944	5,230
TOTAL	6,953	6,795	7,320	7,616

The number of teen girls giving birth in Oklahoma in 2007 was **more than double** the number of incoming female freshmen students entering the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University that fall semester!

University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University enrollment data

Looking at the numbers

In 2007, Oklahoma reported 7,616 births to females under the age of 20. Nearly one-third of all teen births (2,386) were to teens, ages 17 and younger, with 93 of those births to 10-14 year olds! Over two-thirds of all teen births (5,230) were to older teens, ages 18 and 19. One in five births to teens (22%) was a repeat birth.

Number of births by birth order

1st birth	5,944
2nd birth	1,380
3rd birth	253
4th birth	26
5th birth	6
Unknown	7

Number of births by race/ethnicity

White	5,236
Black	999
American Indian	1,315
Asian	66
Hispanic*	1,155

Oklahoma teen birth rates** by age

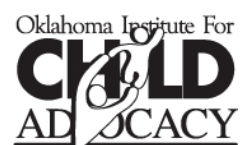
15-19	61.3
15-17	30.3
18-19	111.2

*Hispanic may be of any race

**Rates are the number of births per 1,000 females of the same age range

Data is 2007 preliminary data, unless otherwise noted.

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It is critical that we begin to put what works... *to work in Oklahoma!*



Compared to all other states and the District of Columbia, Oklahoma ranked among the top ten states with the highest (worst) birth rates to teens in all of the following categories for 2005 (most recent data):

- **7th highest** for births to females, ages 15-19
- **7th highest** for births to young teens, ages 15-17
- **8th highest** for the birth rate to older teens, ages 18-19
- **8th highest** in the percentage of births to teens, as a percentage of all births

(National Vital Statistics)

Priorities for community and state action

- Where the teen birth **rates** are the highest
- Where the teen birth **numbers** are the largest
- Youth growing up in **poverty**

Specific groups where the rates and the numbers remain high

Hispanics – highest birth rates among all racial and ethnic groups

Older teens – represent two-thirds of all teen births each year

Youth in, or formerly in, foster care – teen birth rates are higher than the state average

Victims of sexual abuse - in national studies, two-thirds of teen mothers indicate their first sexual intercourse was non-consensual and occurred between ages 9-12

Teen parents – one in every five teen births each year is a repeat birth

Siblings of teen parents – at high risk to become a teen parent

Disconnected youth – the population not connected to school or work, which has the greatest potential for risk-taking behaviors

What Oklahoma can do to reduce teen birth numbers and rates

- **Apply research findings on risk and protective factors to new and existing prevention efforts**, including findings from the Youth Asset Study, designed and conducted by the College of Public Health at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in partnership with the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.
- **Promote programs that are proven to be effective in reducing risk behaviors**, understanding that all programs need to use the most current and accurate information that fits the population and setting.
- **Use positive youth development principles in prevention programs**, including the big picture *Ready by 21* framework created by the Forum for Youth Investment that focuses on *prevention, preparation* and *participation*.
- **Highlight successful programs in Oklahoma:** primary prevention programs, such as *Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI) for Young Teens* and the *Teen Outreach Program (TOP)*; programs that protect sexually active teens; as well as programs serving pregnant and parenting teens that work to reduce rapid repeat teen births.



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